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ヤンデレ系

2

ヴォルフは、
運命って
信じる？

君のことか

ゲームヒロイン「リリィ」が学園に現れ、ゲームの時間軸が始まった！
ヴォルフを失い難い……はじめて抱く感情に戸惑いながらも、リコリスの学園生活は楽しく過ぎていく。
だが穏やかな日常は、更なるヤンデレ出現の予兆に過ぎなかった……！

ハラハラドキドキ満載の、ヤンデレ系乙女ゲー・ラブミステリー第二巻！

It Seems Like I Got Reincarnated Into The World of a Yandere Otome Game

-Yandere-kei Otomege no Sekai ni Tensei Shite Shimatta Youdesu-

**- Volume 2 -
Family Arc**

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[Forgetful Dreamer]



ルイシャン

異国出身のエキゾチックな雰囲気
の美少年。生い立ちの関係で非常に
潔癖な性格をしている。

リリアム・バレー

平民出身の少女。「ヤンデレ系乙女
ゲー」世界のゲームヒロイン。素晴
らしい魔法の才能を持つが、現在は
回復魔法しか使えない。愛称はリリィ。

アルタード・ブルグマンシア

見た目は天使のようだが、子供っぽ
い我儘でリコリスを振り回す、困っ
た後輩。愛称はアルト。

カフィール・ラジータ

リーリア公爵家の現当主で、リコリ
スの父親。国王の名代として各国を
飛び回る生活を送っている。

ウィオラ・アトレイド

学園でも指折りの美人。勝気で努力
家。家柄は決して高くはないが、自
身の出自には誇りと自信を持ってい
る。

オリア

ルイシャンの付き人。リコリスの記
憶にある限り、ゲームには存在しな
いはずの人物だが……？



シェイド・ラジータ

リコリスの義理の弟。幼少期にリー
リア公爵家に引き取られた。自他共
に認めるシスコン。華やかな美形の
上、社交的な性格なので、女子に人
気がある。

リコリス・ラジータ

リーリア公爵の一人娘。大人びた見
た目をしているが、実は好奇心旺盛
で世話焼きな性格。転生先の「ヤン
デレ系乙女ゲー」の世界で、死亡フ
ラグ回避のために奔走する。

ヴォルフガング・アイゼンフート

リコリスの婚約者。真面目な性格で、
人に甘えることが苦手。リコリスには
深い愛情と執着を抱いており、常に
彼女が最優先。愛称はヴォルフ。

Chapter 1

For the time being, looking through a list Father obtained of people who possessed magical qualities in this generation, had become my daily work.

Produced by the magical association, you could say this list, as it is now, was an estimated list of people who would be able to get into the royal magical academy.

However, there were some exceptions. The game heroine's name was not in here. Her case was certainly an exception, since she was a person that was admitted midway; At present, her magical abilities would not have been recognized yet.

Among the group of names on the list, I would mark down some of names with a circle. From those of the five dukedoms and its branches, I selected the children of these notable aristocrats.

'Wouldn't people with high social status have higher chances of being the capturable characters?', was my expectation as I selected these names. For those potentially high social-class people in particular, I marked down with a double circle.

However, this wasn't a sure hit.

(How should I say it, I wanted a group photo shot similar to how the Japanese take it)

That time when I remembered Wolf from the game, I had the liberty of getting his full name and portrait. However, I got this list by telling my father that [I want to know a little bit about the other people who will be attending the magical school with me...], if I tell him [While you're at it, I also want a portrait of each and every one of them...], it might put him off.

Or perhaps, rather than being a problem, it was impossible. Pictures only became prevalent in modern day Japan.

By the way, the name [Shade] wasn't in this list.

It was possible that the name was a nickname derived from his real name, as I couldn't find even a trace of him.

Learning that falling behind on the situation was terrifying, one way or the other, I desperately tried to do everything I could. However, I made little progress.

Because of the inspiration I gained, after staking everything on the list and the countless of times looking over it, I became familiar with the names on it.

(Since it's capturable characters from the game, I'm sure the common feature all of them have will be that they're all good-looking)

I wonder if there was a chance I could obtain any rumour about a good-looking guy that could narrow down my search. The chances of that ought to be slim. The moment I request this from my father, my credibility with him will drop, and I won't be able to fix it without doing something drastic. But if I can succeed with that chance, I was willing to try it...

Interrupting my destructive thoughts half-way, my nanny called me over after lunch preparations were completed.

"...Will my father be joining today?"

"Yes. He is waiting together with a guest."

"There's a guest?"

How disappointing.

"Yes, it's your relative. The madame's younger brother. Does my lady remember him?"

"It's Uncle Narcissus, right? I wasn't informed that he'll be joining us today"

"That's correct. The conversation was a sudden one. He wanted to have a consultation with the Master no matter what"

I didn't know whether this starting point was a good one or a bad one. It was rare for me to attend lunch with numerous people.

"Good day, Uncle. It's been awhile since I last spoke with you. I'm Lycoris"

I said it with a ladylike manner. For a short while, my uncle had a convincing look of

surprise on his face. He was a little slow.

“Lycoris! My, how a child could change, in just a short time of not seeing her. You’re becoming so much like my older sister.”

Telling me that I was similar to my mother, truthfully, made me a little lost for words. After all, with only her portrait, I didn’t know much about the other person.

“Are Aunt and Crinum also well? “

Crinum was a cousin a year older than me. Although we exchange letters often, in truth, it’s been awhile since we’ve seen each other.

“Yes. Yes. They’re both fine. But Lycoris – how old have you become?”

“I’m ten years old.”

“I see, I see. At any rate, you look grown up. I wonder if this is what kids are like nowadays. Although that child is younger than you, that kid is considerably–”

“Narcissus.”

Father cut off Uncle’s monologue.

Hearing Father use a slightly hard tone unusual for him, I was surprised.

“Save that talk for later. I don’t want Lycoris to be involved in that discussion”

“Come now. It should be fine, Kaffir. In any case, she’ll find out sooner or later. I don’t mind.”

Kaffir is my father’s name. No one in the house calls him by that name, so hearing it used was a bit out of the ordinary.

Nevertheless, why did father say that he didn’t want me to hear [that talk]? It’s been known for a long time that Uncle goes slightly off topic.

Proceeding with a wrong guess, I wanted to try satisfying my curiosity.

“Uncle. Who do you mean by [that child]? From what I know, Crinum is a year older

than me”

“That’s right, it’s not about Crinum, I’m talking about another cousin of yours. That kid... is a child that I had out of wedlock...”

The instant he said something incredibly unexpected, I turned to face my father. I wonder if Father understood the feeling I was facing. He sent a somewhat troubled-looking smile back to me.

“Recently, I’ve taken that kid home. That kid is a boy. His name is Shade”

—————eh?

Chapter 2

“U-uncle! I want to meet that cousin of mine!”

The instant those words left my mouth, Uncle made a happy-looking broad smile, while Father made a bitter one.

“Lycoris, come here for a moment”

I obeyed father and walked up to him, what met me was his slightly rigid face.

“Lycoris. You shouldn’t thrust your neck into another person’s circumstances too much”

“But Father, this is my cousin we’re talking about. Aren’t you also curious about what kind of child he is?”

“That might be true... but, as far as your aunt is concerned, she especially doesn’t want outsiders to know about this. Do you understand?”

“That’s... Yes. I understand”

“Then be a good girl and take care of the house, okay?”

Father was planning to go with Uncle, that much I gathered.

The discussion with Uncle was no doubt about the child that was brought in. Thus, Father was coming along in order to check the current situation.

Father’s point may be valid, but since I knew nothing more about [Shade] other than the child’s name, I couldn’t remain passive.

“Father...”

At loss without a good excuse, trying to stop him, I held on to the cuff of my father’s shirt as he said [This discussion is over].

Seeing this, my father frowned.

“...You... want to meet him that much?”

“Y-yes. It’s fine even if you only bring me to greet him. I won’t say anything unnecessary, that’s why, Father, please...”

My father heaved out a sigh.



My uncle, Narcissus Rankgerüste, together with his wife and daughter, lived thirty minutes away from the Lilia household via horse carriage. ⁽¹⁾

Officially, his job was to govern the different territories in the vast dukedom of Lilia, to ease up the dominion. My father didn’t have any brothers or sisters, so Uncle Narcissus, his brother-in-law, took on this responsibility.

But having said that, his post was actually upon my father’s personal instruction – the arrangement of the multiple jobs related to the dealing of those under my father’s jurisdiction, were taken care of by the person appointed as the magistrate. So, the kind of work my uncle was actually doing? That was probably something a child should not hear about.

By the way, it looks like Uncle’s hobby was gardening. Apparently, inside the Rankgerüste premises, lies a wonderful greenhouse.

And it also seems that due to his work, my uncle almost never opens it when he’s at home, but he went far and wide in order to procure the plants for cultivation. U~huh.

Although I kept nodding my head to whatever my uncle was saying, my mind was preoccupied with the constant hope (or should I say, worry) that I might not get to meet with [Shade].



“Where is that child?”

Without any pretense, Uncle Narcissus inquired the head butler as soon as we arrived at the mansion. And in a well-informed manner, the butler quickly returned an answer.

“He is together with Miss Crinum”

I was looking forward to seeing my one-year older cousin, Crinum. And of course, I won't leave her be if she's distressed right now.

Even though we were generally cousins, Crinum and I aren't so similar. She is a beautiful lady with straight brown hair, and a neat and tidy appearance. Her personality was what you might say quiet and shy. When the family members met for a gathering, as the only one younger than her, she hid behind my shoulders.

Being close relatives, as well as having our houses close to each other, we became pretty good friends. Although I did say that we corresponded primarily with letters, we united together as fellow bookworms.

Shade's origin might be an illegitimate child, but he was able to take Uncle Narcissus's affections, and was also getting along well with Crinum. It's curious what Aunt's stance on this was, but with two allies on his side, I think this place would not be as terrible as it could be for him.

With that expectation in mind, I boldly stepped inside the Rankgerüste residence.



But.

Remaining in the guest room, my father and I continued to wait. However, none of Uncle's family members showed up.

“Father. Are you okay leaving work aside for today? “

“Yeah. From the beginning, I accepted that most of my time today will be spent here if I came along. As Narcissus's brother-in-law, and especially since I'm the eldest in our family, I can't think of it as just someone else's affairs”

“That's true... Father, have you already met that child before?”

“No. Not yet. I had just heard that they've been searching all over for that child's mother. It was only yesterday that they found something about her”

“Eh? Then, does that mean that child was only taken in just yesterday?”

“No. Some time has already passed since he was taken in. It’s because I wasn’t concerned about my younger brother that I noticed this too late”

In other words, there were no reports made before my father became aware of this situation. My uncle had decided on his own to take in the child, and was able to keep it a secret, even from my father. It might be rude of me to say this— but that was amazing.

“Uncle is surprisingly a man of action, huh?”

“Well-... yeah, he is”

After Father said it, he hesitated a bit. How rare.

“To tell you the truth, his way of thinking is something that cannot quite be understood. He used to be my second cousin, so we had an old relationship. But even in the old days, I felt that we had a different pace. If anything, I missed those days. Although it is inexcusable for me to say this, I didn’t have to have a really friendly relationship with him”

Father confessed his socializing problems(?). That was even more rare.

“I see, I guess even you, Father, have people you don’t understand and get puzzled over, huh...”

Father looked to be taken aback by my words, and subsequently gave me a wry laugh.

“That’s natural. To begin with——”

“Kaffir! Sorry to have kept you waiting!”

There was one more thing I learned about Uncle. This person – had incredibly bad timing. ⁽²⁾

(1) I stuck with this name, the German word is translated as trellis or a flower fence. The reason I had, was that it's like saying they're supporting characters. And greenhouse, which is Narcissus's pastime, would have flower fences, right? RIGHT???
OTL

(2) I'm taking the literal approach of the Japanese translation. 間(TIMING)が(IS)悪い(BAD)[間が悪い]. Actual translation is unlucky/unfortunate, but unless Kaffir gave him a sucker punch or something for interrupting, it wouldn't fit.

Chapter 3

When Uncle came in, it was my cousin, Crinum who accompanied him. For some reason, it was only her.

“Kaffir... Actually, my wife doesn’t want to come out of her room. Would you be so kind as to help me pacify her?”

Saying it rather miserably, Uncle asked Father to come along with him.

Before leaving us behind, we both exchanged strained smiles.



“Good day, Crinum. It’s been a while”

“Yes, Lycoris. Thanks for always sending letters”

After greeting each other with a smile, I was amazed by her change.

She had grown taller with a curvy, womanly figure. But I didn’t mean that she was fat, her waist and limbs were still as slender as before. Although dark freckles might considerably cover her unusually white skin, I dare say, it would likely fade away in a few years time. And though she likely put on perfume in her hair, it had a fragrant smell.

I don’t know whether it was because she’s been living together with Uncle, but since the day I met her until now, she was far more mature than I was. Perhaps, it was because of age.

“Crinum, during the time we didn’t meet, you grew even prettier”

“Eh?”

“You were already a beautiful girl to begin with, but now you’ve gotten closer to becoming a beautiful woman”

“You praise me too much, Lycoris. You’ve grown considerably as well. You’ve always been conscious of your almond-shaped eyes for a long time, but that child-like roundness stands out from your features. You’ve become an incredible beauty in my opinion”

Since it was Crinum who was evidently saying all that, most likely, my face turned bright red.

While that was going on, Father came in escorting Aunt. How should I put it – as expected of Father’s skills, that was extremely fast.

Crinum and Aunt, when they were standing next to each other, were really a spitting image of each other.

“Hello, Lycoris. Thanks for worrying about Crinum and coming today”

Having Aunt give a slightly weak-looking smile, I could only return a “No, it’s nothing much” as I thought of how unforgivable my true intentions were.

[She was worried about Crinum~] was probably the explanation Father gave to her. Although I was worried for Crinum, in truth, the reason I came to this place was mostly so that I could meet [Shade].

Times like this when I rush on madly towards one matter, I might forget to consider other people’s feelings. I shall reflect on this.

Now then, what has happened to [Shade]?

Even at that time, when we took our seats for dinner, he has yet to show his face.

The reason he hasn’t shown for dinner, as Aunt explained, was:

“He hasn’t learned etiquette yet. That’s why he can’t come out and taken the seat”

Well, I think that might be highly probable. Dinner etiquette was demanded in the aristocracy; I’d say, if it wasn’t obviously beaten into my head at a young age, it would be doubtful for me to comprehend the intricate gestures required during mealtime.

Having said that, in Aunt's words, were a biting sense of coldness as expected. Even considering that Aunt was reluctant to let it out in front of us, the thought of having a stepson should be a complicated affair. That was only natural, though.

Directing to me, Uncle said.

"That's right, Lycoris. If you don't mind, why don't you teach manners to that child? He's a slightly shy kid, but he might trust you who is of the same age"

If Uncle believed a [shy kid] would lower his guard to a female relative who appeared out of nowhere, then that would be considerably "positive thinking" in my opinion. Everything won't suddenly work out just because we are of the same age. I didn't voice that out though.

Crinum was very quiet throughout dinner. Honestly speaking, I had been curious about what Crinum thought of her little brother, but asking her directly is, as expected, not possible.



And so, after dinner.

Finally, Uncle led both Father and I to [Shade] and met him face-to-face.

Shade was an adorable, seemingly angelic child.

Peculiar gold-brown hair framed his soft cheeks, his eyes were a deep brown... was what I thought, but when I looked closer, his eyes had more of a reddish tinge than brown.

His skin looked transparently white, and his cheeks were rosy red. I seriously didn't think a day would come that I would ever describe a boy like him

However, his body was considerably and delicately thin.

Thinking of a guy that was around the same age as him, Wolf came to mind. Although since Wolf rapidly became buff recently, he probably wouldn't be a suitable target of comparison. But, even then Shade was really thin. I wonder if he was malnourished as a child.

“This child is Shade. Shade Rankgerüste”

In response to Uncle’s words, as usual, my head was filled with information.

Shade. In the game, he had been in the same magical school as the heroine for five years. In other words he had been sixteen years old. The current him had no resemblance to his older self; his masculine appearance floated in my mind. In the game, his still-pictures had lively, or otherwise charming smiles on it.

Contrary to Wolf who had hated women, Shade had been a character who loved them. However, there was a problem with his love for women. He actively pursued women by happily giving out sweet words — then blatantly leaving them afterwards. You’d think that he just hated women, but if he only hated them, he wouldn’t try getting close to them. In other words, he had a love-hate relationship with them.

Being cheerfully sociable, was a well-crafted lie. He was the type of character who had a good head on his shoulders.

His mother was a harlot. His father a nobleman. Pulled away from his mother, and only receiving neglect from his step-mother, when he somehow sneaked out and arrived at the nightstreet where his mother should have been, he found his mother running away with a new man. Such a painful pas- hold up, wait – wait just a moment.

The father in this case was Uncle Narcissus. Wouldn’t this mean, he received ill-treatment from Aunt?

“Shade, she is your cousin. Beside her is the Duke of Lilia, my brother-in-law. Look carefully you two. The color in this child’s eyes are red”

This... happy-go-lucky Uncle, at the moment, he unveiled his family. Aah, isn’t this how he conducted himself when he was searching high and low for the many cultivated plants or purchasing them?

Although it’s horrible, I’m already completely awake.

Furthermore, this was closer than expected.

“Your Grace. Miss Lycoris. Pleased to meet your acquaintance”

He — Shade, was anxiously clutching his chest with small thin hands, but still, he smiled with all his might as he bowed his head. Because of the other party's high social standing he didn't really know what to do, but still, the young boy used all his might to show his thanks. This was how it looked like to me.

I wouldn't know what the actual contents of his heart is by only looking at what's outside.

Chapter 4

Afterwards, I was given some time alone with Shade.

The one who forcibly brought out this development was Uncle Narcissus. It seemed Uncle was serious when he asked me to take charge of Shade's training, as that was how it was explained to Shade. Neither I nor my father remembered agreeing on this matter.

I wonder what was the cause for Uncle's forceful actions. Was he expecting something from me? Or was he hoping to get Father's support on this? I can't discard the possibility that he didn't think about anything, though.

At any rate, this was a chance for me to ask the questions I had about this complicated situation.

"I'd like you to call me Lycoris. There's no need to add [Miss] after all. Would it be alright if I called you Shade?"

"Yes"

"Have you already had dinner?"

"Yes. I apologise for not coming out for dinner"

"It's fine, you don't have to worry about things like that. By the way, what did you eat? Did you have the same meal we had for dinner?"

Although internally, my heart was pounding as I asked the question, Shade smoothly replied that he had the same menu for dinner.

I was relieved. It seems, at least for now, his meals haven't been left out. While it was rude, I was able to hit the nail on the head by asking a slightly blunt question.

"Do you have a small appetite? You seem incredibly thin"

"No. That's not the case... it's only that I'm not used to the [good food] provided here"

It wasn't an unnatural answer. For most people, it's likely the things they ate from an

early age would be what they would consider as delicious.

“I see. Well, even if you get used to the meals here... you’d still yearn for your honored mother’s cooking, right?”

At the mention of his mother, his red eyes seemed to wobble and tremble.

And then those eyes, towards me– towards the girl in front of him who had asked the rude question, sent just a small glare.

“Even if I yearned for it, I can’t go back. After all, it was my mother’s own volition to send me away”

Finally able to take a glance at him after he shared his sentiments, I was overcome by a strange sense of relief. That’s because, while being this small, having a person with complete control of himself as an opponent, somehow, I felt like I wouldn’t stand a chance.

“That was careless of me to say, I’m sorry”

“...it’s alright”

“From tomorrow onwards, I’ll be teaching you a little bit about manners. It would truthfully be better if you learned this from a man, but for the time being, I’ll try to teach you what I can”

“Yes. Thank you very much”

Shade smiled and laughed delightfully.

This one-year younger cousin of mine, the aspect of him that was very innocent seemed unnatural no matter what. Of course, this was because his personality had a gap with the game character Shade; but some might say that my opinion was biased.

That’s why when I saw this kind of smile, I instead ended up thinking that perhaps he used it when he wasn’t being honest.

“Studying about manners is very important. If firmly disciplined, it’s an armor that can be used to protect yourself in the aristocracy. Because it would become your strength.”

“...strength... is it?” (2)

“Yes, that’s right. It’s strength in a broader sense. Did it pique your interest?”

Shade merely tilted his head, but I think it got a little of his attention. Even if this role of mine as a teacher was only for a short time, I wanted my student to have the desire to learn.

“Then, let’s continue tomorrow”

“Yes”

“Good night”

“Yes”

“Good night”

“...good night”

For boys of this age, it might be a bit embarrassing to have this exchange. But greetings are important. From tomorrow onwards, I will have to thoroughly train him on it.

When I realized it, I completely became serious in taking up my role.

After that awkward farewell, I parted with Shade and began walking towards the guest room.

Because I had visited this place countless times since I was still small, there was no need for someone to guide me there.

For the first time, I thought about Shade.

I wanted to know his situation and his thoughts. For example, was Aunt really maltreating him? What were his thoughts about Uncle and Crinum? If I was able to obtain Shade’s trust, I wonder whether he would talk to me about them. Or, should it be with an adult he could trust– should I leave it to Father, then?

Uncle adores Shade, and Aunt most likely neglects him, at worse, he’s probably detested. In Crinum’s case, I wonder what she thinks of him?

When she first learned about his existence, she must have been shocked. She probably despised her own father’s actions. And she might have even been angry about it. But,

at present, I think she is taking care of Shade. Crinum is a nice girl.

My thoughts flew to the time I was playing with Crinum in this mansion.

When I was young, I was holed up inside my room and was branded as a child that was only into books and nothing else; but, when father took me to come to this mansion, I didn't have the free time to read those books. That's because I was too busy playing with my gentle cousin who was close to my age.

Since Aunt's educational policy did not allow us to play outside, the young Crinum and I entertained ourselves by exploring every nook and cranny of the house, with dolls in one hand. As small children, the usually never visited closet or storage room was a world of unknown adventure to us; the strange appearance of the attic was what we were especially pleased with.

Taking along our dolls to the attic, we chose to play pretend in the house. The little bit of sweets we hid in our pockets were all gathered there. I wonder if that attic still remains even now

Suddenly wanting to talk with Crinum, I tried to turn back.

So there was no way with such a timing, could I have expected that I would be accosted by the person herself.

"Lycoris"

"Eeeh!?... Crinum?"

I likely jumped in surprised. Crinum's thin body stood leaning on the wall, exactly in between the corridor's lamps and lights.

The corridor's lamps were in equal intervals; the parts that were bright and the parts that were dark were intensely different. Naturally, since I only concentrated on the parts that my eyes could see, it was only when I was this close that I noticed the other person.

"S-sorry. I was lost in my thoughts while walking. For me to do such a thing, my attentiveness was half-hearted. What's wrong? Were you waiting for me?"

Crinum didn't answer my question.

When I tried to approach Crinum, she backed away several steps from me.

"...Crinum?"

"Lycoris, I have a favor to ask from you, so I was waiting for you"

Finally, Crinum gave me an answer and I was relieved, her words rousing me.

"What is it? Tell me whatever it is"

I answered, puffing with pride. For example, if she wanted to speak out against Uncle, I'd happily do a suicidal attack on Uncle's room.

However, Crinum's words were different from what I had expected.

"Please, to that child– to Shade, don't get too close... I'm begging you" ⁽¹⁾

Facing down as she said it, I could not see her facial expression under the cover of the darkness.

"Crinum? What do you..."

My question was drowned out, as she repeated "*Please*" once again.

"That's... is it by any chance, because Aunt doesn't want anyone to see that Shade is being maltreated, is it like that?"

Mentioning the likeliest possibility that I'd realized, Crinum hanged her head in shame.

"You knew about it then. What Mother thinks of that child? Is the Duke also aware of this? Did you guys... come to this house for the sake of helping that child out?"

Suddenly lifting up her head, her expression was brimming with hostility aimed towards me. I was shocked about various things, and yet confused.

"No... I'd say it was only me who had thought of it. Most likely, Father has yet to notice

it, and even if he did, if there was any way to settle it in this house, then he should have already gone and tried thinking of it”

“I see... that’s good. Please, Lycoris. Don’t tell the Duke that Mother is treating that child badly”

“That’s... If you’re the one that asks this of me, then I would grant the request, but... why? If you ask Father, then wouldn’t he be able to help Shade out? At this rate, I don’t think that Aunt will be okay at all. And if you left it to Father, then I doubt he would ever cause Aunt harm blindly. Let’s consider the best option for all of you”

Crinum kept silent. After a long, long time, she finally opened her mouth.

“You know, Lycoris. The first time I met that child, I thought what a beautiful child he was”

The vigorously unstoppable torrent of words that Crinum spoke out about, was not about Aunt.

“But at the critical point of introduction, Father introduced me as that child’s older sister, and he said all of a sudden: [Crinum, if you didn’t have freckles, you would have looked a little similar to Shade]. I... was so ashamed. Somehow, I felt I couldn’t compare with that child’s face and I thought there was no way I could address myself as such. That child wasn’t just beautiful, he was also smart. At the start, he had a strange accent, but soon after, he began mimicking people’s pronunciations, and his way of talking became beautiful as well. When he first hears the words, most likely he hears the person’s pronunciations even before it leaves their mouths. Repeating those, it’s like he never had an accent when he talked. Isn’t that amazing? That child, on his own, spoke to me. He said that my freckles will vanish when I became an adult so it was okay, and that I... was really beautiful. But, as expected, standing before that child, I was perpetually terrified. But you know, a turning point came. For some time now, Father had wanted to obtain a particular rose, and he went far away for it. When Father left the house, Mother locked up that child. Telling us that we absolutely cannot bring out any food or water to him. I thought, that was something that cannot happen; so that night, I secretly came and brought some food and water to that child. That was the first time. That child spoke to me on his own. That child needed me. I...” (3)

Speaking in one breath until that point, Crinum seemed to return to me.

When Crinum was engrossed with a book, she would discuss the hero or heroine's sentiments, and became talkative. Right now, she stared dreamily like she did at those times.

However, I wonder whether she realizes it. That is, the kinds of things that are coming out of her own mouth.

(T... this is...)

From her hands and also her pale lips, it was evident she was quivering, even in the dark. However, her words did not stop.

"Lycoris, you've really become beautiful. And even long ago, you've always been smarter than I was. I... absolutely don't want you to get close to that child!"

Saying it over her shoulder with a strained-sounding voice, she ran away.

Chapter 5

The next morning.

I started my special attack on Shade.

“Good morning”

“Ha...? Eh...?”

“Good morning”

“...good... morning” ⁽¹⁾

Even though it was morning, my goal is to make sure that there won't be a time he'd be impolite.

It looks like Shade is weak in the morning. With a sleepy look, he was bewildered in the face of an uninvited guest.

“I apologize for the abrupt visit. But a lot of things are tangled up, and I already don't know what – or perhaps I should say, I already don't know whose feelings would be the correct one to prioritize. That's why for the time being, let me hear about your sentiments. You... In this house... you were locked in a room by Aunt, and your meals were stopped, right?”

Momentarily dumbfounded by my non-stop chattering, he was then plainly suspicious; Giving me a look as if he was searching for my intentions, he stared at my face.

“That is... who did you hear it from?”

“From Crinum. And in truth, I did slightly doubt that possibility”

“.....”

“It's not like I'm asking you to trust me, whether it be me or my father, we are on Aunt's

side; I don't have any means to dispel your suspicion on whether I'm really deceiving you or whether your distrust is unjust. But, I want you to answer me one thing no matter what. Why didn't you tell Uncle that you were receiving terrible treatment from Aunt? Or for instance me or Father – you could have searched for someone reliable who could take care of you and get you out of this house. Was it that troublesome for you?"

"I..." (2)

Because I was surprised at the first spoken word he said, he immediately gave out an apology.

"That was rude of me. Since I was poorly brought up, I lost my focus for a second"

"No, I don't mind. In particular, if you're able to converse with it, then it's fine no matter what form of speech you use. But if you want to get used to polite speech, I'll go along with you"

"Well then, I do hope you forgive me even if I mix in inappropriate words. Personally, I do think you are a person I can trust" (3)

"...even when you've only just met me yesterday? As you know, I am related to Aunt, the person who neglected you"

"But... you're related to me too. You're my cousin, right?"

"That – might be true, but..."

"At least, no one in this house greets me with the common [Good night] or [Good morning] courtesy. Compared to them, I consider you as someone who I can speak frankly with"

"Then, would you let me hear the reason? Why didn't you say anything to Uncle?"

"There was no major reason for why I didn't do it. It was simply because it would be useless even if I did tell him"

Shade said indifferently, with something akin to coldness in his voice.

“Aside from flowers, the only thing that person is interested in is my eye color. That’s it”

“Eye color? Well, your eyes certainly are unique in color, did you happen to inherit it from your honored mother? “

“When you say [honored mother], I had to think about who you were referring to. Mother was normal, she had brown-colored eyes. According to Father, the gene was from his grandmother passed through my father. In other words, I inherited this color from my great-grandmother”

“Great-grandmother...? Oh, her...”

“Were you acquainted with her?”

“Since it’s regarding your father’s grandmother, it’s also related to me. She died long before I was aware of my surroundings so I personally didn’t know her. But, there were a lot of tales about her. Like, she completely ignored the marriage proposal from the royal king of that time. Now that you mention it, I feel like I’ve heard something about her unique eye color before”

“In the Duke Lilia’s family, I heard that a lot of people had possessed hair and eyes of the color red”

Indeed. My closet was filled up exhaustively with a puzzling rouge color. Could this literally be the clan’s image color?

Looking at Shade’s dark red pupils under the morning sun, it was definitely a color closer to rogue.

“Uncle was really fixated over this color, huh? Once in a while, there are those in the aristocracy who love their [Family lineage] to death, but was Uncle also of that sort?”

“That’s nearly a disease, isn’t it?”

“Even with his abnormality, I don’t think it’s a reason to overlook the problem that’s happening in this family. For the time being, why don’t you try telling Uncle? But then again, wouldn’t this provoke Aunt...”

“I’ve already told him. And he said, [bear with it for a while]”

“...eh?”

“ [Right now, my wife hasn’t seen what’s around her. But, she’ll realize your merit soon. Until then, bear with it for a while]”

“That’s... what he told you? Bear with it? Is that... a line a father should be giving his child who’s being abused by his wife?”

“At least, in Narcissus Rankgerüste’s case, it is”

I was at my wit’s end.

For countless times since reuniting with Uncle yesterday, his favorability graph with me continued to decreasingly swoop, and I don’t know if it would stop at this point.

“Okay, fine then. Let’s quit trying to rely on Uncle. You won’t be troubled if I told Father about it, right? Then, I’ll immediately inform him”

With this action, I’m probably betraying Crinum. When I begin thinking that she had confided in me because of our friendship, it frankly starts feeling painful in my chest. That said, seeing that there was a victim of child abuse, there was no way I could just remain watching in silence.

Shaking off last night’s events with Crinum which floated in my mind, I headed to Father in high spirits.

However, this should have been called a trick of fate, since things didn’t go so smoothly.

“Eh? He departed from the house this morning?”

“Yes. It was before dawn. A messenger from the capital came by, it seemed there was a sudden job that arrived. Although he was worried about you, my lady, he couldn’t bring himself to wake you up, so he departed alone”

When the butler explained the regrettable situation to me, I wound up placing a hand on my forehead.

A messenger from the capital delivering urgent work to Father wasn’t rare. However,

for this to happen so early in the morning, it was extremely unlucky.

I ended up returning to Shade's room dejectedly.

"I'm sorry... it seems like I can only tell him as soon as he comes back here, after his work is over. In the meantime, I'll do all I can to prevent Aunt from doing anything to you. That's why, could you wait just a little bit more?"

Although saying [wait just a little bit more], was like repeating the hated words Uncle said, I was saved since Shade energetically nodded his head in my way direction.

That was the only thing I informed Shade about, before fleeing his room. Naturally, if Crinum found out that I carelessly went in and out of Shade's room, I would never be able to look her in the eyes.

Fortunately, according to the maid, she was still in her room.

Since it was awkward meeting Crinum at the breakfast table, I complained that I was hungry in order to quickly eat breakfast alone.⁽⁴⁾

Doing this selfish thing in someone else's house, who knows what others might think of it, but I wouldn't be able to escape that problematic situation without making some sacrifices.

However, once again, fate wasn't treating me kindly.

Since morning, with a daily lesson on how to take care of flowers, I ended up sharing the breakfast table with Uncle Narcissus.

The freshly-baked bread lined up on the dining table were attractive; even with the soup having a different flavor from what I had at home, it didn't taste bad.

It would have been awesome if Father or Wolf & Duke Ranunculus sat in front of me, oh – just thinking of it shouldn't be a sin.

In some respects, Uncle could make pleasant conversations, but my responses became unconsciously unenthusiastic.

I had been trying to get Uncle to give a hand in investigating, but now, I've already

completely given up on relying on him. Relying on Father would absolutely be better. That was how I felt.

“Lycoris, do you always wake up this early in the morning?”

“No, it’s because I slept a little early yesterday... Aren’t you also up early, Uncle?”

“Watering the flowers is, in the long run, better to do in the morning. I’ll take a nap momentarily after eating a light breakfast”

Really, Uncle’s life does seem to revolve around and focus on flowers.

I inclined an ear to Uncle’s gardening lectures for the moment.

Although my heart wasn’t dancing, a peaceful time passed by as it is – it was at the moment as I was reaching out for desserts. Uncle started dropping an exceptionally large-scale bomb on me.

“By the way, Lycoris. Why don’t you, with our boy– Shade, get married?”

Right here, Uncle somehow started speaking an alien language.

(1) Again, he’s adding a polite term. There’s no English translation to properly deal with this, but this is how I cut it “...Good(ohayou)... morning(gozaimasu)”. “Ohayou gozaimasu” is basically good morning. Leaving out gozaimasu is just “Morning”.

(2) He use “Ore”...the little boy used “Ore”. Go back to Family-hen notes, if you didn’t understand why Lycoris was surprised...

(3) he continues using “Ore”

(4) 朝食の席 is actually breakfast seat, or the location you gather at breakfast. I don’t think anyone uses breakfast place/ breakfast seat in English though

Chapter 6

[Haah?] even as I returned that, I was being mature.

After all, what left my mouth was a very realistic objection.

“But Uncle, I already have a splendid... fiancé...”

My engagement with Wolf has already been made public. There’s no way Uncle didn’t know about this.

By the way, the face I currently had on, already magnificently cramped up from twitching. But, it’s not as if Uncle notices anyway, right? So, I just sulked internally.

Whether or not he was aware of the voice of my heart (No, he absolutely isn’t aware, I’m sure of it), he developed his own pet theory with eyes that gazed into the distance.

“However, the rumour of why Kaffir was trying to marry you off to another family, was because there was no one who could be your partner in this family. If that’s the case, there’s a potential with Shade. After all, when Kaffir was worrying about your engagement partner, he had yet to know about Shade”

I wonder why I felt obliged to pursue this conversation even when there was already a gap in communication.

Whatever conjectures he might have, the engagement has already been decided. Even though I already told this to him, was it that difficult to understand?

“...but, Uncle. That wasn’t what I meant at all... it’s not like I fell in love with Shade, and neither did he with me. And, I think the blood relations are too close to marry my cousin”

“No, I don’t agree”

Uncle adamantly insisted.

“Marrying a cousin should be the obvious thing to do. Rather, it’s precisely because the

effort of inbreeding is being stopped that we're losing the [Red of the Duke Family Lilia]" ⁽¹⁾

[Red of the Duke Family Lilia]

Though the words were unfamiliar, I somehow understood the meaning. It was as Shade said, former members of the Duke Family Lilia tended to have hair or eyes of the color red.

"Uncle. Neither my eyes nor my hair are red. They're pitch black"

That's why I'll be troubled if I were expected to revive the [Red of the Duke Family Lilia] or whatever that was, was what I was about to say, but Uncle cut me off.

"But, that black hair and bright red lips are exactly like Grandmother's. It's definitely Elder Sister's blood. You know, even among our clan, it was said that Elder Sister was especially similar to Grandmother. So for certain, Grandmother's blood flows deep inside of you"

"Well, I'm often told I look like Mother. But I don't really know about Great-grandmother"

"It appears you don't understand the value of the [Red of the Duke Lilia Family]. In the old days, the people in our Duke Family, who were born having that red color, possessed strong magical ability with almost no exception. Even if I were to say that it was due to the power of the color red which led the Duke Family Lilia to prosper in the past, it is by no means an exaggeration!"

Uncle's fervent speech, I felt, gradually grew eerie.

I had already had enough, I need not use logic when arguing with Uncle. Generally speaking, I really want this conversation to end.

"I'm... getting along well with my fiance. I like him"

I didn't use the word [Like] because it was convenient. I certainly do like Wolf. Those feelings went back and forth between friendship and love, though its standing position was something which was ambiguous.

Although it wasn't makeshift measure, if I plainly refused him with just this, I did think Uncle might give up.

"No, if you have a person you love, it's better not to be bound to them"

Uncle's words became more and more incomprehensible.

And yet, Uncle rebuked me with a tone as if he was using some universal logic.

"I heard Grandmother was this way, but my older sister had a damaged side too. Jealousy can be so frightening when all you can see is one person. Kaffir, in some way, suffered too. But my older sister, who looked so much like Grandmother, had to be married off to a man in the family. This was in the hopes of getting a child with a thicker blood. Well, even within the same generation, her influential voice was strong. When it was decided that Kaffir became the scapegoat by that person who had her way, everyone around him pitied him" ⁽¹⁾

What was this? What was it with this man?

It was no good to believe anything this person says.

"You're very similar to Grandmother and to Elder Sister. Don't you think your disposition would be similar to theirs as well?"

It was as if those were the words of a curse.

If I continue to listen to Uncle's words any further, I'll likely go mad.

And so, I rushed out of the dining room.

I'd rushed out of the dining room.

But I couldn't bring myself to return to my room alone.

If yesterday didn't happen, I would've sought Crinum for refuge. But even that was impossible right now.

Wanting to be healed by the trees for the time being, I headed to the unvisited garden of the Rankgerüste house.

Today, because of Uncle, no matter how beautiful the flowers were, I didn't want to see them. I don't even want to be near the flowers that Uncle took care of.

Whenever I caught a glimpse of the vivid colors of the flowers, I would continue to walk by changing my route. Occasionally, when I saw a bench that had the comfort of shade underneath the trees, I would remain sitting there, viewing the scenery and searching for a good leaf to make as a reed pipe. Then when I grew tired of it, I would get up to walk once again.

Before I knew it, the sun was already high up, but it wasn't because I was lost in thought, instead, I keep thinking my exhausted mind had completely blanked out.

And so, around the time that I kept on walking unsteadily on my feet, I encountered Shade.

Somehow, I didn't think I'd meet him outside.

It was probably because the impression that he had been locked up by Aunt was intense in my mind that I thought so. In addition to that, was probably because his skin was almost transparent in its whiteness.

But, in any case, his appearance was that of an ordinary boy. There was nothing strange about him coming outside to play.

Instantly after his face came to view, I'd perhaps put on an awfully unpleasant face. It was because I'd recalled Uncle's outrageous proposal.

However, just by lightly shrugging his shoulders, Shade instead showed his concern for me.

"You're terribly pale. I'd have thought you'd seen a ghost"

A fair amount of time had already passed, yet it seems any stranger who sees my face could still tell that I looked pale.

"...I think there might be some in this house, for all we know"

"Did you get bullied by someone?"

“It was Uncle. Your dear father”

My voice was heavy with resentment.

“Sorry”

“Why do you need to apologize for?”

“For the time being, it’s because he’s my father. Since we’re on that topic, would you like to accompany me in making idle complaints about him?”

“...thanks”

When I considered that he was another victim that Uncle took advantage of, I relaxed.

Upon deliberation, I told him about the conversation I had with Uncle.

Spilling all my complaints to [Shade] was something that I would never have imagined I’d do when coming to this mansion.

But now, to Uncle’s ideas– to the ridiculous idea of Shade and I getting married to each other or whatever else, the fact that the other party was here laughing together with me at the [nonsense], was a lifesaver.

It was fun having him listen to my stories about Wolf. By now, just mentioning [Wolf] made my heart feel at ease. I am extremely tired.

I still don’t have any plans on telling him about conversation about Mother. Even though this was the topic that damaged my feelings the most during the conversation I had with Uncle some time ago, I haven’t sorted it out internally yet.

“And after that, Uncle said something about my mother.”

Eh?

“He said Mother was similar to Great-Grandmother, and that both of them had been horrifyingly jealous people. On the contrary, in what aspect was the damage that he would say such a thing? For Father to have had no intention of marrying Mother... then,

wouldn't that be like saying that I... – I hadn't planned on telling you these sort of things"

Shade smiled sweetly, and my, what a lovely smile it was.

"It doesn't matter what the story might be. I'll happily hear it. Surely, it would be better to talk about it and become at ease. Once all the talking is over, it'll be fine to leave the rest to me. You want to rest, right? Your face looks incredibly tired"

Shade's thin fingers trailed my cheeks.

"N-no!"

With a do or die spirit, I broke free from his hand.

His voice was sweet. I knew following his voice would've been much more pleasant. Just thinking about going against it had been discomforting.

But somewhere in my mind, alarm bells were sounding. These were the kind of alarm bells that must never, ever be ignored.

"I'd thought if it was a case of a steel-hearted woman, but was it more of the case of a strong will? No, that isn't it – Or, maybe it's a problem of a magical disposition. Whatever the case, this is troublesome"

Holding my jaw with a jerk, I began to look into his eyes.

I ended up once again, peering deeper, and deeper into those rouge-colored eyes. I couldn't look away.

My whole body was rigid, my heart was thumping as my pulse raised. Not able to control the strength of my clenched fist, my nails were biting into my skin.

"You're a good girl, after all. Just listen to what I say, and I'll be sure not to do anything naughty"

When he whispered so closely in my ear like that, I–

Punched the side of Shade's face with all the strength in my fist.

And from there, I enacted my suicidal escape.

Since Shade was momentarily taken aback from being hit in the face, I ran towards the house. After noticing this, he gave chase.

Having someone seriously chasing me was a truly frightening affair. Moreover, I was wearing a dress. Why were skirts made to be difficult to run with?

But thankfully, Shade was not quick on his feet. By dashing with all I had, the distance between us did not shorten.

(But, who in the world would I get help from?)

There was no way I can keep running all the way to my house. However, if I escaped into a place inside this building, would there be anyone who would lend me a hand?

As my bearish sentiments reared its ugly head, my feet's movement slowed down.⁽²⁾

You could say that, in the nick of time, I was yanked to the side by a pull on my hand.

With a determined look ahead, he stepped forward, passing me from the side, revealing himself, somehow catching my feet from falling over as it got tangled up.

This person... who protected me by yanking me behind his back, without even making a sound, hit Shade who was running from behind!

“Wolf!”

There was no way I could have been mistaken at that moment. This person, was Wolfgang Eisenhut.

After Wolf hit Shade, his arms quickly twisted around Shade, locking him in place.

“My hand acted out instinctively... but is this okay?”

“Right on! Ah... what I mean is – that's... in this case, at the very least, Wolf isn't in the wrong!”

I corrected my statement, because right behind Wolf was the Rankgerüste house butler, who was looking at our direction with perfectly round eyes.

“When Duke Lilia told me [I’ll entrust my role as Lycoris’s knight to you], I thought the duke was joking around, but... what on earth is going on?”

“I really love Father and Wolf!”

“L-love...? Ah – no – I’m not unsatisfied, though...”

(1) Basically I think when he meant by thicker blood, is that the bloodline is kept within the family, so that the descendents will inherit the powers of Narcissus’s grandmother.

(2) bearish: the thought that things will fail. That is, pessimistic.

Does anyone read notes? This is a small one, extra line from light novel it seemed, thanks to kazeyuki for giving me this info.

For those who read till the end...

“Wolf’s face turned visibly red”

Chapter 7

“Just a few moments ago, it was magic being casted on me, wasn’t it?”

Upon my interrogation, Shade replied with a face feigning ignorance.

“What might this be about?”

Shade’s hands were bound behind him, and a blindfold covered his eyes.

Of course, the one who did all those was me.

Although Wolf’s single blow to Shade’s stomach was not visible from the clothes he wore, my punch wedged a painful cut on his lip. Nevertheless, I won’t show him any sympathy.

Even though the cheek I striked using all my strength had swollen up, reaching up to this point had been on the verge of vexing.

Shade did not have any indication of confessing, but alternatively, after receiving my explanation and pondering over the situation, Wolf began speaking.

“From what I heard so far, he possesses magical attributes by [escaping the sealing]”

“Escaping the sealing?”

“You also received a [sealing] from the magical association when you were five, right?”

“Yes. So that our magic doesn’t run wild. It was for that purpose, wasn’t it?”

It was in accordance to Wolf’s explanation.

All children of the nobility who possessed magical attributes were subjected by the association to a magical [sealing] in their early childhood. And then, that magical ability will be plainly manifested once they hit puberty, passing over the state wherein magic could not be used, they would enter the magical academy at twelve years old.

From there, by learning the control of magic, the sealing would gradually be released.

In other words, a [sealing] was for when the awakened magical ability, with a naive state of control, rampaged; for such scenarios, this was a preventive measure.

Incidentally, this was only limited to the children [of the nobility]. After all, currently almost all the magical attribute holders were of noble blood. Whether the special abilities have always solely manifested in the nobility, or whether the increased possession of the power in the nobility was just recently attained, there were varying theories on that topic.

“Even if one receives magical powers at birth, there were two general exceptions where one would not receive a seal. One, is a child born out of wedlock. Another case would be when a child is born into a family of non-nobles and obtained the magical power through a mutation. Meaning whichever of the two, since the association would not be aware of those kinds of existence, it would result in an exception”

Although I was gaping with my mouth open like an idiot while listening to Wolf’s explanation, I finally came to my senses.

“H-hey, aren’t you somehow well-informed? Concerning the information on magic, except for casual matters, they’re not granted to children, right? I’d been told that until we enter the academy, self-study, including theoretical study, were banned without exception. In fact, I couldn’t get my home-tutor to teach me anything about it. Furthermore, whether it be children or even adults, didn’t they make a darling trick so that any books related to magic were unreadable so long as they weren’t graduates of the school? “

“Yeah, that’s true... but, actually, there’s a loophole. Not only can you acquire a certain amount of knowledge from the adults’ conversations, but as a matter of fact, if you go to the capital, with a small amount of cash you can get that trick temporarily removed from the books...”

Very sulkily, I gave Wolf a glare.

My curiosity long ago motivated me to stealthily go into my Father’s study, the bitter memory of how I felt unwell, not able to leave my bed for half a day right after taking a peek at the book related to the magic’s principles that I secretly borrowed, resurfaced.

“That’s typical for men, isn’t it? For women in the family restricted by the conduct built by seemingly obvious unwritten rules, going outside on their own would be a self-indulgence, don’t you think?”

“W-well... this probably isn’t the time for that kind of conversation, isn’t it?... right now, this conversation is about him”

Having blatantly been diverted from the topic, I turned around to face Shade. Of course, it wasn’t because I had been fooled. I vowed to myself that once this matter was over I would press him on that no matter what.

With Wolf’s earlier explanation, an example of magic obtained through mutation by birth, was the heroine.

And then, the child born out of wedlock– in other words, a child born from a moment aside that of the binding of a married couple in accordance to marriage, such scenario where escaping the association’s eyes was a possibility – that was most likely a matter about Shade.

“ [Escaping the sealing] was it... but, once it’s found out that he has noble blood, wouldn’t the association say or do something about it?”

“Of course, they ought to speak out. However in that scenario, the child would already be proficient at the manifestation of his abilities, so the association’s sealing becoming incomplete is possible”

“I see... so then, for example if the association gets notified that a child with magic was using it – what would happen if that was leaked out to them?”

“There’s nothing that can be done if it’s not in the scope of a criminal act. A more robust seal known in the association would only be applied to that person.”

“Then what if it was a criminal act?”

“Besides putting that person on trial, a semi-permanent magical seal will be placed on him”

I turned back to look at Shade, however the colour on his face did not change

appearance.

“Is there something like a mind-controlling magic?”

“That would be fascination magic. The effect is stronger on the opposite sex, if the other party has their mind in a weakened condition, then the effect would become even stronger. In a manner of speaking, although the magic is only displaying the most attractive part of the person, it’s troublesome depending on the level of magical power used”

With that, I had expected by such a lack of skill that I was just about to obtain knowledge.

“Shade, did you use that kind of magic on Crinum?”

“Well, I honestly don’t know what this is about...”

Shade showed a laudable face.

Ah, geez, this is troublesome.

“I guess, there’s no other choice but torture...”

“Please don’t tell jokes with such a serious-looking face – ... you were joking, right?”

“Who knows”

Huh? Wasn’t Wolf a little troublesome as well?

No, rather, for the time being, let’s leave the matter regarding Wolf aside. This is about Shade right now.

To start with, he has no doubt [escaped the sealing].

However in that case, it would become a matter that would overturn my one prejudice with Shade.

The game’s Shade, of all things, had lied even to the game’s heroine.

No, maybe he was lying, or maybe in fact, he just purposely omitted things from his statements. There should be a considerable difference with those, but if it was the latter, I feel that it can either be forgivable or unnecessarily vicious.

At any rate, when Shade told the heroine about the contents of his past, there was no indications of matters relating to him having [escaped the sealing] and the likes.

Speaking of which, he didn't even allude to Crinum.

If I remember correctly, the [Shade talks about the past] event was an event that happened pretty early on. Inside the game, for the purpose of attracting the heroine to him, he probably cleverly concealed the bad parts of his circumstances when he spoke about the past.

That is to say, the current reality.

"When you were casting magic to make your older sister an ally, did you make it more effective than what you'd planned?"

Twitch, Shade's body moved.
I guess I got it right.

Some gaps remained, but something like this was, as expected, a little abnormal.

If he wanted to make Crinum his ally, I dare say, he only had to behave courageously then it would have been okay, wouldn't it? Crinum is, by nature, a gentle girl.

Most likely, the action of bringing Shade food and water was not because of the involvement of Shade's magic. It was an action made entirely on her own, that's what I believe.

And yet, Shade used his own magic to control such a girl like Crinum. Maybe it was that he didn't trust her, or maybe it was that he couldn't trust her.

Having no faith in women– no, it's not as if he relaxes his guard around men, so maybe he has no faith in anyone. He did not trust people, because distrust was an important point constructed for Shade's character in the game.

Which reminds me, Shade's bad ending basically developed from a strong jealousy for not believing the heroine and fear since he didn't want to lose the heroine. It might be the template behavior of a yandere though.

“Wolf, what is the method to cancel out fascination magic?”

“Since it’s not permanent, as long as it isn’t reapplied, it should eventually cancel out on its own”

“Then, once Crinum returns to her true character, she’d be a living witness to Shade’s magic, right?”

“That would be a little doubtful. The difficulty with fascination magic is that it’s hard to know if the effect is due to the result of the magic or the natural charm of the user”

“Wolf! Why are you saying that in front of Shade!”

“Well. He probably knows his own powers the best. That’s why, if we’re talking about a reliable method, I believe a few violent threats would prompt a confession from him...”

“Rejected!”

“Then, it would be better to leave this to an adult. Thankfully, Duke Lilia is scheduled to arrive here tomorrow”

That was really pleasant news.

Since Uncle came into the room with the butler, we explained Shade’s magic briefly and left the room.

If it were only possible, I would not have wanted Uncle and Wolf to be in each other’s presence, and neither did I want to show my face to Uncle as much as I can.

Afterwards, I was glued to Wolf throughout the day, not leaving his side. Well, of course, it was only a metaphor, though.

There isn’t only one person, but two people here, I was deeply moved for it to have reassured me this much.

Just now at the dinner table at the Rankgerüste house, it was only me present, but in this case, I felt at ease.

Although Uncle prepared a room for Wolf far from the guest room I was using, I was satisfied that I won't somehow be receiving Uncle's indirect harassment. Anyhow, if I do receive it, it was a distance I can immediately run. No, if there was any disturbances, I should tell him to stop.

At any rate, I was lying on the bed thinking about the degree of unexpected and unpleasant events that happened today with a peace of mind.

Proving it was Shade's power that was to blame, meant Crinum's sudden change wasn't because of the actual person herself (or – I don't know whether or not it's right to declare this, but at the very least it wasn't only because of her) and knowing this was a big deal. The hope that I might be able to reconcile with my precious cousin if given time filled my chest.

Above all, I was assured that once tomorrow morning come, Father will turn up and solve everything.

Everything.

However, there was only one thing for me that if nothing was done, wouldn't get resolved.

In the end, I didn't tell the comments about Mother that my Uncle said even to Wolf.

Wolf would probably tell me that I would understand if I heard the real situation from my father. If I were on the opposite end, that would have been my advice.

However, I wanted to clearly delay thinking about that.

Several excuses floated to mind.

In the first place, it was about a dead person. Consequently, if it was about slandering a dead person, I'm sure Father too, would dislike the idea.

Although Father was a person who liked talking, even so, topics about Mother rarely ever come up, of course, since he doesn't want to talk about it, he probably wouldn't talk about it.

If I ask him "Did you love Mother?" and listened, I wonder how Father would respond.

It was a matter of the past.

But, if there was one thing I was curious about, it would be about this.

Thankfully, my eyes were closing and drowsiness was overwhelming me. The fact that it wasn't only because of my heart, but also because of my tired body after walking profusely, was a blessing.

Once my eyes closed, it would stay like that till morning.

...though I said that, it didn't go as planned.

Chapter 8

After being shaken left and right, I was pulled from the edge of sleep.

Judging from what I was feeling, it felt like I had closed my eyes, sinking into the sea that was my futon, my awareness nearly on the edge of slipping away, when I was suddenly pulled out with a net.

The owner of the hand who'd rudely shaken someone's shoulder – was Shade.

“...??”

Surprised by the invasion of an unwanted visitor while getting up from bed, it was considerably clear that I woke up in an instant.

“W-what on earth?”

Shade was standing next to the bed I slept on, adjusting his heavy breathing.

The reason that I did not poke fun at him by saying things like “Are you a pervert?!” was because no matter how I looked at it, that situation was not natural. The white face that the faint light on my bedside illuminated was especially pale like a ghost.

“Did something happen?”

“F-father, he...”

“What about Uncle Narcissus?”

Shade, who had an unprecedented frantic look on his face, reported to me.

“My eyes, he told me to hand it over”

These were Shade's excessively outlandish words.
But I felt like I've heard it somewhere before.
Inside the game.

[When I was a child, my father said “hand over your eyes”, and chased after me]

This matter was never further explained on whether it was a joke or not, it was depicted in such a way that not even the user or the heroine really understood.

However, I’ve already experienced a glimpse of it in this reality. Through Uncle’s obsession with regards to the [Red of the Duke Lilia Family]

“Don’t tell me... right now – you’re being chased by Uncle?”

I only managed to ask that, when Shade nodded his head several times.

Just then.

A knock resounded across the room.

I dragged Shade under the futon, only in time to haul up the quilt.

Then I shut the lights off by covering the magical lamp on the side of the bed with my personal cloth.

The sound of knocks continued on.

“Y-yes. Who is it?”

I clasped my trembling hands together while praying from the bottom of my heart for it be Wolf.

“Lycoris. It’s me. It’s Narcissus. I’m sorry since it’s late, but did Shade happen to come in?”

“He didn’t come in”

I regretted it just as I said it. It was way too unnatural for a person who had just awoken to respond with an answer. ‘What’s wrong?’, or something similar was what I should’ve asked in returned.

“I’m coming in”

Without waiting for even an acknowledgement, Uncle entered the room as if he owned the place.

Inside the room, was pitch dark.

As Uncle continued his approach, I waited until he was at the side of the bed while suppressing my nerves, and then I hurled the pillow I'd been gripping at him.

Having thrown it with the full force of my body, it fortunately hit him square on the face and broke my bewildered Uncle's stance. I took Shade's hand and ran towards the door.

Although escaping to Wolf's room had also crossed my mind, his room was on the opposite direction from the stairs. More than getting Wolf involved, I deemed the matter of letting Shade escape be settled first. ⁽¹⁾

"Let's escape outside!"

Shade and I ran down the stairs, towards the door that connected to the outside.

But large door's locking was, even from the inside, something that us children couldn't do anything about. Naturally, there was no time to look for the key.

I asked Shade if he happened to know a place that led outside, but he shook his head while taking in pained breathes. Even for me, though I'd played around this mansion before, a way to go out from this place, with the exception of the door, was a matter that I'd never considered.

For instance, we could jump into a room somewhere, open a window, and escape. But right now, we didn't have the courage to leap into any of the lined up rooms along the hallway. That is, our group of shorties was in a situation where a window would be an unusable form to move in or out, possibly, owing to the form of the key, we'd be in a state where we'd be imprisoned at a dead-end.

While we didn't find the best plan, the sound of footsteps coming closer as it continued to descend, urged us to run towards a different staircase. Then, through the direction of the upper floors, we headed to the attic room. In there was the only place I knew in this Rankgerüste mansion where holing ourselves was possible.

We rushed up the stairs as fast as we could, and leaped into the attic room. Collaborating with Shade, we piled up absolutely every bit of items within the vicinity in front of the door to use as a barricade. Then, I gave the instruction to Shade in order to climb up the ladder at the corner of the room.

This attic room's structure was two stories. Generally, the room entered from the door was the first story. From there, climbing ahead through a simple ladder was the second story.

After Shade had ascended, I followed as well, if we pulled in the ladder from the top, it's expected that no one else would think of climbing up. Sitting in that place, our heavy pants were cut off by violent coughing induced by the increasingly bad atmosphere.

Although we quickly opened the window, there was no wind so it didn't offer much ventilation; at the side of the window with Shade, our two sitting forms settled down.

"That guy – do you think he'll go as far as to come here?"

"...most likely. The other party has the territorial advantage. And our whereabouts will probably be exposed. Even with the barricade, since it's only made on the spot, I think something like that wouldn't hold him off. For the time being, once he breaks through the barricade, let's just throw any of the stuff here at him"

Indeed, since this place is used as the usual storage room, there are a lot of items placed here.

For example, apart from Uncle preparing a ladder in order to climb up, it will probably buy us some time while causing hindrances.

"What on earth happened for it to turn out like this?"

Once the front of his face came into view again, Shade's complexion seemed even more terrible. I just realized it now, but under the illumination of the moonlight, his pale skin had a small injury that appeared to be a scratch. It was a different injury than what I had caused during the day.

Although my wariness towards Shade hadn't disappeared, all the same, in this situation his overall acting probably deserved praise now.

“After I was handed over to that man from your hands, I was imprisoned in my room alone. But, once night fell, that guy came to my room. He said he wanted to properly talk with me”

“At long last” probably, and it seems like I wasn’t the only one who had that thought.

“I thought why was it only now, you know. I had already had my feigned friendliness almost peeled off anyway, so since I considered it was finally the right opportunity, I spat out the resentments I’d been bottling up”

“Such as?”

“You’ve been spoken ill of for your incompetency. You’re simply not someone I can respect as a father. Do you truly believe that I’m your son? If I inherited your blood then I should be more of a moron... of course, in truth, the words I said were even more vulgar than that though”

“Eh? You... were you not related to Uncle by blood?”

“No. While it’s unfortunate, I probably am that man’s son”

In other words, his depression piled up to the extent that if he didn’t say “you’re not my father”, he wouldn’t be able to calm down. Somehow I understood.

“And then... he said [hand over your eyes]?”

“Yeah. He said “hand over your eyes, then leave this house”. That was the first time I heard that guy’s angry voice straight up”

An unpleasant sweat ran down my spine. The sweat might probably be partly because it was getting colder, but it felt like nothing could be done about the unpleasant coldness.

Then in that timing, the door connected to the corridor made a clattering sound.

Ga-tan, ga-tan, a dreadful sound continued to reverberate.

“Lycoris. You’re in there, aren’t you? Come out. I’m not angry with you. You’ve done

nothing bad, right?"

Of course, I absolutely didn't come out and just remained silent.

I desperately removed my presence and even went as far as to shorten my breathing. Nevertheless, the barricade was not as strong as my determination.

Ga-tan. Ga-tan. Ga-tan. Ga-tan.

Just a little bit each time, it carried along the door, after the gap of the door and the barricade was approximately ten centimeters from opening up, it became insubstantial.

Uncle placed his foot into the attic room.

At the moment, Uncle was searching around the attic leaving a huge shadow of a luggage while calling out in a soft, coaxing voice.

"Shade, if you've reflected, come out right now and I'll forgive you. Then, you and Lycoris can be married and make children. Children having red eyes. No doubt they'll be born possessing magnificent abilities. Grandmother, the one who'll grant your dearest wish, is not your precious Kaffir! It's the one you looked down on, the one you shunned – **ME!**"

His voice had become louder in his excitement, after that, it suddenly became silent.

"Aah, I see. Didn't I tell you it's dangerous for children to climb up to such a place"

In the past, I wonder whether Uncle said such a thing.

Rather, in more detail, matters like that were things that left Aunt's mouth, Uncle should've been completely uninterested with how much we played around or anything of the like.

That's right. Since long ago, Uncle, didn't have any interest in us.

Be it Crinum, or Aunt, they were never a target of Uncle's interest.

Even Shade, his existence was not what pulled Uncle's interest in the truest sense.

From above, we were supposed to throw things at Uncle or something and gloat about

it, but I wasn't able to move from the side of the window. Just like me, no – even more than me, curling up his frightened body was Shade. No matter how arrogant an aspect of him was, he was still a younger kid than me.

The two of us, possessing no courage to peek from the gaping wide open square hole to the room below out of the reaches of the moonlight, merely nestled close to each other quivering. If I peered below, “wouldn't a monster having a completely different appearance from Uncle be there?”, was what I truly thought.

Whatever was happening down below, it was making a clattering sound.

I was increasingly petrified. Even without preparing a ladder, if it was an adult, they'd be able to come here by climbing up if there was a slightly tall stool, was what dawned on me.

A long time ago, when the young Crinum and I took refuge here, I realized now that the reason we were left alone was because of Aunt and Uncle's compassion.

I shut my eyes tightly and continued to block my ears, huddling up my body in order to cover Shade. Most likely, with a squeezed out voice, I called out for someone to save us.

Gan. Ba-tan. A loud thud sounded from below.

It was a sound that reached even my blocked ears.

Then a voice.

“Don't treat the children as your toys! Especially not my daughter!!”

With my father's strong words, tears spilled over from my eyes.

Chapter 9

Following that, Wolf leapt in and, with his help, Father immediately tied Uncle up.

In the aftermath, starting with Aunt, Crinum and Mr. Butler, each and every member of the Rankgerüste family assembled. Several people within were completely ignorant of what just occurred, thus had on confused faces.

With the relevant people assembled in the living room (of course, excluding Uncle), the details of the matter, after we settled down, had been explained like this.

First, why had Father been in the Rankgerüste mansion at this hour?

Frankly, after he'd finished work at the capital (the work's detail was to escort a guest of honor to a night party) Father had already decided that he was going to return here by this evening from the start. The reason why I'd been informed that it was tomorrow morning or so was because to complete one more errand of his, it didn't look like he'd be able to return before I went to bed.

The one more errand referred here was, an anticipated private conversation with Aunt in the Lilia mansion.

Even though I said that, it wasn't for a tryst.

It seemed Aunt had to say it at all cost, the contents of the conversation was a confession of sins. Aunt started from what she did to Shade and continued as far as Uncle's plans on wanting to hasten my marriage with Shade at any cost.

That idea of Uncle's looked like it made Father raging mad, while absolutely thinking of knocking Uncle out, it seemed he rushed to the Rankgerüste mansion in the middle of the night.

As for why Wolf was here, somehow, after parting with me at night, it looked like Uncle expelled him out of the house. He had been confused. A ten year old child, moreover, with the title of the prime minister's son that Wolf possessed, to be driven out in the middle of the night from a house – in various senses, the absurdity was in a level of its

own.

But you could say Wolf had considerable guts. After pretending to return to the inn by the abandoned road, it looked like he tried and succeeded to sneak into the house.

First, he headed to my room, but found it completely empty. Thereupon, he met up with Father and Aunt.

Wolf: “Lycoris isn’t inside!”

Father: “What did you say? I also can’t find a trace of Narcissus”

Aunt: “Shade isn’t around either! Don’t tell me – did that man force the two of them to get married!?”

The conversation sounded like it went something like that.

Aunt’s thoughts lacked common sense.

Though, I think that was within the bounds of the situation that led to being told in the middle of the night to [hand over your eyes] among other things and chased around.

Right then, Crinum came into sight, testifying that the sound of clattering was coming from the direction of the attic for some reason. Even the servants, who slept in a separate building, gradually gathered straight to the attic room, that was how it seemed.

To sum it all up.

The reason why Father punched Uncle without any time to argue sounded like it was because a misunderstanding played a part in it.

Geez, my father was too magnificent. His figure as he snappily instructed the Rankgerüste servants within the intervals of the conversation was awfully cool.

Incidentally, as we listened to the story, Shade was wrapped in a blanket with a warm drink in hand and, it goes without saying, I was clad in a blanket on top of Father's lap the entire time.

Wolf stared in this direction with an envious look, but just for today, even if Wolf was the one who wanted this seat, I wasn't willing to give it up. Sorry, Wolf.

"Father, your help was honestly appreciated"

When I once again voiced my gratitude, Father smiled shyly.

"No, actually, I couldn't have imagined that you'd call me in that setting... I was really happy"

"That setting?"

"Just before I jumped into the attic"

Now that he mentioned it, I might have said something then.

I mean, well, I probably did. [Father, help!] or something.

Embarrassed by my own childish behavior, I pressed my face against the bottom of Father's neck.

"You don't have to make that face. After all, I'm more or less an adult man and a father. I had only a slight superiority in terms of abilities"

Whatever it was that he'd considered, Father's words had been directed at Wolf.

"Thanks for your concern. But this happened because I wasn't by her side then"

Speaking of Wolf, really.

Him saving me from Shade was a story of just half a day ago, had he already forgotten about it?

For the sake of passing what I'd also recalled of the events, I explained how Wolf

played the role of a cool knight to Father.

Thus, while talking with Father and Wolf, I truly felt like we'd passed over a terrible storm at last.

Eventually, Crinum left the room so as to support Aunt. Just before then, she bowed her head apologetically towards me and my heart was exhilarated. Supposing that my friendship with her really returned to the way it was, then it would be a completely joyous affair.

Even after Crinum settled down in this room, it didn't seem like she'd try talking to Shade to get closer to him. 'Was this because of the rejection or was it because of the confusion?', the conclusion was difficult to say. ⁽¹⁾

In Aunt's case, I knew that it was the fault of that uncle that she faced a lot of hardships. Still, the things she did to Shade ought to be her wrong.

What will happen to Crinum and Aunt? That was probably a matter the ladies would have to decide themselves, though Father wouldn't be unwilling to lend his help, and there might be something I can do to help as well.

Then, when the butler was about to urge Shade in the same way to leave the room, he suddenly began trudging his way here.

Thanks to the blanket wrapped up around his body, the flush on his lips and cheeks returned.

I greeted him by going down from the top of Father's lap.

The first thing Shade did was to turn about and politely lower his head towards Father.

"Duke Lilia, thank you very much for your help earlier"

"No, you've suffered through a lot, didn't you? I hope you'll be able to sleep well even if it's just by a little bit more from now on"

Shade gave a troubled-looking smile. The thin fingers that were tightly grasping the

blanket were, in some respect, pitiful.

(Nh?)

“Lycoris. I truly regret involving you in all this. At that time, you were the only one I could count on...”

“...no. It’s not like you were the one at fault”

“Thank you. If you weren’t around at that time. I shiver at the thought. If I’d been alone, around this time...” (2)

Shade, who was looking frightened by his wild imagination, took out his hands from under the blanket and reached out to mine. Perplexed by having my hands held, I call out to him saying “it’s going to be alright now”.

Speaking as a person who equally tasted that fear, I knew that it was truly a terrifying feeling. I knew that, but...

At that moment, hearing our conversation, Father spoke up in a somewhat high-spirited voice.

“In front of a boy younger than her, Lycoris-chan properly acts as an older sister, doesn’t she? Having similar outfits on, the both of you are adorable. It’s like the two kids standing next to each other are angels, you know”

It was impossible.

An impossibly spontaneous remark.

By the way, the [similar outfits] he was referring to, was this sort of appearance where we were awkwardly clad in blankets.

Before I could even say a word, Wolf plainly reminded Father.

“Duke Lilia. He’s using fascination magic. Please take note”

I nodded my head while sounding my agreement. No matter how scary the future he’d have suffered was, Father had considered Shade’s behavior too admirably.

“It’s alright. Fascination magic doesn’t work on me”

To have Father clearly assert with a denial – I, Wolf, and even Shade widened our eyes with shock.

“Even if I look like this, I was an honor student in the magical academy. Since I had a good conduct and the aptitude, I was even allowed to use fascination magic. However, to be pushing your luck with opponents who hold suspicions, you’re still quite green. This... magic, you see, if you were to say, use it here, you have to absolutely let no one know you’re using it in order to display its true value”

Having said that, Father showed Shade an awfully gentle smile. Shade’s expression was dyed in bewilderment.

“Ah, don’t misunderstand, Lycoris. I’ve never used unnecessary magic in my life, and even after this, I definitely won’t. You see, in the case of magic that works on the mind, it’s an act that twists human relationship after all. If all of you study earnestly in that school as well, I’m sure you’ll learn to use magic with a purpose and a reason”

Isn’t that like saying he’s using it moderately at work? Of course, Father is only engaging in diplomacy though.

Since it’s kind of scary, it’s probably better to leave it unasked.

While shelving it away in my mind, I nodded at Father’s words.

Now then, as for Shade.

He drew back a short distance away from Father.

Maybe for him, this could be the first time he met an opponent whom his own magic truly couldn’t pass through.

Yet, instead of turning his heels and escaping, he remained.

“What will become of me?” ⁽³⁾

“I also feel responsible for what was done to you by your father and mother at this house. I deeply apologize. What’s more, I’d wanted to introduce you to a reliable caretaker, but...”

“Is it difficult?”

I cut into the conversation, and Father gave a troubled-looking smile.

“To tell you the truth, if I left him under the poor care of a relative unintentionally, I’m afraid a second or a third Narcissus might surface”

My face cramped from twitching.

“F-Father, please stop joking”

“It’s not a joke...”

While saying that, Father gazed at Shade’s red eyes.

As for me, I despaired at the muddled ways of the relatives of our house.

“Of course, even so, there are still family members who can be trusted. Unfortunately, in this case, by leaving you in their care, you might end up standing in a maelstrom”

“Then wouldn’t it be better to find a completely unrelated family with no blood relation? “

“In that case, it would probably become a tremendous blow for us. After all, it would mean revealing the [Red of the Duke Family Lilia] to the outside”

With those words, a little bit of cynicism left Father’s mouth.

“But Father, if that’s done...”

“The choices are roughly the same. In other words... our family will take charge of him or something of the like”

With Father’s words, I thought about the game character called [Shade].

Huh? Had [Shade] been [Lycoris]’s step brother? No, no matter what, I think I’d remember if there was that sort of setup. So, this might be a development that became different from the game.

Though, now that I think of it, I couldn't remember [Shade] 's last name in the game entirely. That was not a problem of my memories or anything of that sort; in the game, he might not have used his own last name. Even in the character introduction, he was only introduced as [Shade]... was how it felt like.

I was hoping this was a development different from the game, yet, I didn't have that conviction.

Once again, [Shade], was someone I fully realized was a character who spoke little about himself. Secretive characters were a pain!

Indifferent to my confusion and raising his voice in loud repulsion, was Wolf.

"You must be kidding! Lycoris got manipulated by him, you know!?"

Because that vigour was excessively strong, I thought to the extent that [Huh? If this conversation was setback because of Wolf's objection, wouldn't the anguish I suffered today be of waste?].

"Of course. It would be different if Lycoris objects. And there's also a problem that has to do with the court rank; frankly, as it is now, there are also other bothersome alternatives"

Father's, Wolf's, then Shade's glances collected towards me.

Somehow, the matter on whether Shade will be welcomed to our house, seemed to rely on me. Give me a break.

"...what does Shade want?"

I was swayed by the adults who had their own various circumstances, however, comparatively, I swayed the surroundings from myself, the relative villain, to turn it around to my bothersome cousin.

"I... don't need the court rank. However..."

Shade hesitated to say it then refused to talk. But, at the very least, I knew he wasn't opposed to this idea.

Even if it was by a process of elimination, there probably wasn't any other option for Shade but this.

"How about your mother's place...?"

"Mother no longer has a place for me by her side"

Aah.

So it was like that. He already knew about it.

That the mother who handed him over to his father had already run away with another man.

He had already come to the point where he was unable to rely on either of his parents.

Shade was still considerably shorter than me, so when he lowered his head, the whorl of his head was the only thing I could see.

In connection to him having done so, I ended up recalling him quivering as he curled his body up in that attic room...

After I'd been on the receiving end of his fascination magic, I'd thought that I'd absolutely never approach this guy again. Yet, in that escape drama, I'd come into contact with the weakness that Shade had been hiding away.

I gave Wolf a side-long glance. He had on a sulky expression, he must've probably known what I was thinking. Moving just my lips, I conveyed the words [sorry about this] to him.

"Oh yeah, which reminds me, Shade. First, as a condition, you've got to ask to have your magic sealed by the association"

To my words, Shade clicked his tongue with a "tsk" and promptly scowled at me.

"What's with that face? Isn't that obvious? After all, even if Father was fine with it, I'm not"

“...for me, this power is my lifeline”

“But, you can’t even control that magic, can you?”

“.....”

“Well, I understand your anxiety, but if you come with me and Father, you’ll be given a new power”

Shade resolutely pulled a suspicious look.

“A new power... was it?”

“Right. That is, you see... knowledge and... skill!”

Do~n.

I had planned to say some good things, but, Shade’s objection had little hope for it.

“Are you actually saying that mundane thing is equivalent to the power I’ll lose?”

Making it sound like I was a fool, I huffed indignantly.

“Far from being equivalent, you’ll be hiding away an even more magnificent potential. Let’s say you escape from here today and used that magic as much as you like from now on, who’s to say you won’t make another disaster like what you did to Crinum? If you run away from the association, you won’t be able to study in that magic academy, you know?”

Shade kept silent on the matter without objection, however, he did whisper in retaliation.

“...quarrelsome woman”

“What was that!? I’ve got to say this to you, you’ve been underestimating women way too much for a while now. You’ve been thinking something like [once I show a slightly sorrowful face or a smiling one, it’s a cinch], haven’t you? It’s extremely irritating!”

“That’s false accusation, you know”

“As if. You’re definitely faking it. Thinking something like [The Great Angelic Me is the best~]! ⁽⁴⁾ With that, since there’s no proper opponent to be faced, if anyone was going to be the favorite to win, it would be this effeminate man who can’t even flat-out express love!”

“...honestly, isn’t this false accusation?”

“Huh, getting angry? I hit the mark, didn’t I?”

It was at this moment that we glared each other at close range.

*pan**pan*

Facing the sound of clapping, we saw Father with a wide grin on his face.

“The two of you seem to get along exceedingly well”

Wolf approached us in silence and, continuing without a word, pulled my hand, distancing me far away from Shade.

Thus, having been alone in my family, this became a matter in which the members of family increased.

(1) It isn’t directly implied, but I guess it’s the rejection from Shade’s magic and the confusion of the current situation...

(2) He said “boku” when he referred to himself here... he’s trying to act like a cute kid...

(3) He reverted to his normal way of speaking...

(4) One more translation would be “The Magnificent Angelic Ore-sama is the best~”, how do you translate Ore-sama?

Extra: Voluntary Service with Lycoris

I've made the blunder of a lifetime.

What was it about?

It was about the time when I was clinging to that girl, shivering and shaking like a leaf.

After hearing about my real father through my mother, my life has been filled with troubles to the extent that it could be called a drama.

But no matter what kind of cheap drama this was, having the Duke's Family take charge of the main character and having them all live happily ever after as the story's conclusion might not be how the plot would go about being written. At the very least, the word [Duke] should not have been used.

What's more, of the five Duke families.

In this country, it was only those five families and no other family, whose influence shined radiantly if seen from the viewpoint of the masses.

The Duke of Lilia, Kaffir Radiata, was in fact, a person worthy of respect.

To be upfront, my real father, Narcissus Rankgerüste, in comparison, was not.

Initially, for sure, I'd been vigilant against the impression of a crafty adult, however, he didn't even have one unreasonable bone in him, he treated me the same way as he would his beloved daughter, Lycoris.

I definitely have no intention of saying this out loud, but at the time that my mother told me [you know, your father is an aristocrat], his conduct was what I'd imagined my father to be.

No, more than imagination, it exceeded that of being considerably indulgent.

And, supposed to be shining in the same influence was the duke's daughter, Lycoris

Radiata.

Although even to me, her demeanor and conduct were as one would expect from the duke's daughter, the things she says when she opens her mouth are all considerably frank. Having observed my real sister, Crinum, I had been under the impression that this was what an aristocrat's sheltered daughter was supposed to be like. For that to be the exact opposite of her disposition astounds me even until this day.

Lycoris had reluctantly accepted the fact that I became her step brother, but now that I was attempting to start a new life, she already seemed just like a mother bird building a nest since she tirelessly tended to my affairs.

"This is your room, right?"

"This is yours. Including me and Father too, if someone comes in without permission, it's fine to get angry at them"

She had gone out of her way to do this task of explaining it to me.

That is to say, she was trying to make it clear what my so called privileges are with regards to this family. I won't say that it was her endeavor, in particular, that had borne the fruit, but, while not very much time had gone by, I felt like my own room in the duke's house became a [place where I belonged]. At the very least, the room was much more than what was given in the Rankgerüste mansion.

But, having said that.

There's no way I'd say that with this I'd reconcile with her – no, with that woman.

The first of that woman's unforgivable acts was, for sure, coming to wake me up early in the morning.

For me, who had been accustomed to the street's night life since I had been aware of my surroundings, a life sleeping from the rising sun had been the norm. Though, if you compared that to the life sleeping at night that one gets accustomed to, you could say that I was weak in the morning.

That woman did it – roaring mercilessly close to my ear, tearing off my futon without exception; one time, I ended up dropping from the bed along with my futon. An

apology immediately followed, but since there was laughter in her voice, I won't let her off for this.

In addition, she's been forcing me to eat breakfast without fail.

When I refused to eat, she'd have a smug look on her face, saying:

[That's the reason why you're still skin and bones even though so much time has passed, you know. Although your arm is way slenderer than mine, what's with that – are you proud of it?]

Do you actually think there would be a possibility that I would be?

The second of that woman's unforgivable acts was, the fact that she keeps tricking me into doing things using that eloquent mouth of hers.

That woman – she kept bringing up the time she helped me after my father got mad that one time in the Rankgerüste mansion, saying things like, [even though you were really cute then] or [if you can't sleep at night, I can read you a book], as she had come to tease me with. I already feel like I had no chance of winning with words against this fellow. Honestly, the fact that I requested aid from this girl, earning me a blunder at that time, had been regrettable.

Even now, this was still the case.

"What do you think about doing voluntary service?"

Having personally heard the completely uncharacteristic words, I attempted just in case to resist.

"Well, I don't really have any interest in it. If you ask me, who's of a commoner origin, I'd say these things are a nobles' deceits"

"Yeah yeah. But among the group of children invited today, I'd imagine they wouldn't know such a word as [deceit]. Just with a candy or a meal, they'd be happy, you know. Well... they are pure. Unlike you"

"I dislike children"

“Because you’re a child yourself?”

This was exactly what I mean.

In the end, somehow or the other, having been tricked into this, I ended up being the attendant assigned to handle those misbehaving brats.

As for that woman, she was attempting to get a group of children to learn manners even just a little through an absolute~ly useless endeavor. Although it was only to train them how to properly use a napkin, as far as the children were concerned, the likes of using the beautiful napkins was probably more inconceivable than using their own clothes. Even as they were told that it was okay to dirty the napkins, they were all but bewildered.

From the beginning, for humans, a birthplace and even an upbringing would make a difference like heaven and earth, for them to try to surround the only dining table was itself a mistake.

Having these sardonic thoughts, I gazed in their direction, whatever Lycoris was thinking, with a white unsoiled napkin, she straight out wiped the face of a child who had dirtied the corner of his mouth the most.

Although the white napkin had tragically turned dirty, she reassured them and smiled, ‘this was how it was to be used’, she directed.

Thereafter the children mimicked her actions, instead of their clothes, they used a napkin to wipe their mouths and hands.

For some reason or another, as I watched, I carried an unsatisfied feeling within me.

–to tell you the truth.

For my body, the habit of waking up early in the morning, had already been indelibly ingrained.

In the morning, I feel slightly awake from hearing the noisy chirps of the birds and, though my eyes still did not open, due to the aroma of the freshly-baked bread, my stomach will grumble in hunger. I’d gotten used to thinking that, ‘she’ll probably come in, in just a few more minutes’.

Whether it was somehow my body's calculating way. Or whether the surrender to the duke family's tranquil life quickened this much, it was to the extent that I felt tamed.

All of a sudden, my eyebrows furrowed, narrowing my field of vision. A child, who had consumed more than enough portions of the meal for its small body, ran up to Lycoris. It was the child whose face she'd wiped earlier on.

The small child, who was difficult to identify as a girl or a boy even by looking, also had the audacity to blush while looking up at Lycoris. With Lycoris bending down to match the child, it frantically made some kind of conversation with her.

"----Big sister Lycoris~~~~"

The brat probably didn't properly understand the difference in social position, calling Lycoris, "big sister", without a care.

"Rather, she's not *your* big sister, right?"

The words that were only murmured surprisingly reverberated across the large dining hall. After she'd looked in my direction with surprise, whether it was a look of happiness or of craftiness, she grinned broadly.

I've made the blunder of a lifetime.



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